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S E R M O N

Preach'd on Jan. 19, 170³₄.

BEING

**The Day appointed for the
Fast, occasioned by the Storm and
Tempest, November 26, 27.**

In the Parochial Church of *Edensor* in the *High-Peak*.

H
By *John Griffith*, M. A. Curate of *Edensor* in the
High-Peak, and Chaplain to his Grace
William Duke of Devonshire.

Vivat Regina.

L O N D O N :

Printed, and are to be Sold by *A. Baldwin* near the Ox-
ford Arms in *Warwick-lane*. M DCCIV.

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Preach'd on Jan. 19. 1704.

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PSAL. LXXXIX. V. 32.

If they break my Statutes, and keep not my Commandments, I will visit their offences with the rod, and their sin with scourges.

WHat God Almighty by the Mouth of his Prophet says here to the house of *David* in particular, is also in general the case of all Empires, and Kingdoms, and States, -throughout all Ages of the World: Who, (though in the time of their flourishing Grandeur they may fancy themselves erected upon the Basis of their own strength, and exalted upon the horns of their own power and wisdom, and consequently neglect all thoughts, and spurn at all admonitions of that blessed Being, who is the founder of all Dominion,) as naturally upon the stroke of his

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afflicting hand grow dismay'd, and shrink into their Original Worm-holes, and cry for mercy, which they have too long slighted, when Justice and Judgment unchangeable are at hand, and press quick upon them, and the lashes of the avenging Angel hang with dread over their harden'd loyns. So apt is that ridiculous thing call'd Man, in the fulness of his prosperity to swell against even his Maker; and so ready in his adversity to whine, and groan under the pressure of the meanest of his Creatures. This is a truth too well known from the observation of all Mankind; but from no part of it more experimentally certain, than the Observation of Unthankful *Israel*, the most unaccountable people the Earth ever knew, unless our stupid folly, and perseverance in our Iniquities and Sins bring us up to the Standard of their Ingratitude and Madness.

The Eloquent Psalmist has therefore, in contemplation of this strange and wonderful truth, in the Beginning of this incomparable Song, one of the best, if not absolutely the most exact pieces of Poetry now extant in the World, stretcht all his melodious notes, toucht all his

Strains

charming Strings, and lifted up all the artful Strains of his Pious and Tuneful Soul, in displaying the glorious and shining Attributes of the Great God of Heaven and Earth; in the celebration of his Power, and the admiration of his Mercy. The former requiring all the flame and rapture his enkindled mind, and wandering faculties were capable of exerting; the other, all the Melting Softness, a penitential and humbled Spirit, could in its awful effusions dare to express. To pretend to give any further description of it, would flatten the Character, and vilifie the excellencies of the incomparable Original; which I shall therefore now recommend to your private meditations, and perusals; and only transiently connote with it, that, as the power of God is transcendent, and admirable, beyond what Heaven or Earth can imagine or comprehend; so his Mercy is great and boundless, beyond what even that Heaven can contain, or that Earth deserves. The Heavens, says this inimitable Singer, are thine; the Earth also is thine. Thou hast laid the foundation of the round World, and all that therein is: Thou hast a mighty Arm, strong is thy Hand, and high is thy Right Hand: Thou rulest the raging

of the Sea, thou stillest the Waves thereof when they arise: Righteousness and Equity are the habitation of thy Seat: Mercy and Truth shall go before thy face.

He goes on to reckon up the many prodigious favours God was pleas'd to pour upon all *Israel*, and in a singular manner on the Family of *David*; and with an amiable ecstasy recounts the blessings, and with a lovely joy proclaims the mercies of God, and his indulgent promises of their continuance. But he closes all with these just conditions, that Obedience is expected in return for Mercy, and an Humble and Godly Thankfulness for the mighty Love, and ineffable Bounty; otherwise nothing would follow, but the desolation of the Land, the ruine and miseries of the People, and the dreadful confusion of his Royal Power, and the Subversion of his Throne and Greatness. But thou hast abhorr'd, and forsaken thine Anointed, and art displeas'd at him. Thou hast Broken the Covenant of thy Servant, and cast his Crown to the Ground. With a pitiful catalogue of innumerable misfortunes in the sequel of the Verses. The summ of the whole amounts to just this, and no more, That any People, whilst they continue Holy,

Holy, and Obedient to Gods Word, and Stedfast to the fear of the Lord, may expect that the favour of his Countenance will shine upon them, and the Glory of his Protection Overshadow 'em; and that, tho it be possible, the Long Suffering of the Lord may with-hold his Vengeance, and arrest his Thunder for several spaces of time, yet that at last contemn'd Patience will burst out into Fury, and Justice overtake and punish, what Love and Mercy could not win and allure. *If they break my Statutes, and keep not my Commandments, I will visit their offences with a Rod, and their sin with Scourges.*

From which words I shall, First, Reflect upon the Natural Disobedience of Man, as it is a Violation and Infraction of God's Statutes, and a Contempt of his Commandments.

And 2dly, Consider the terrible Effects, that attend the Displeasure of an Enraged God. To both which, did not the severity of the Weather confine me to speak briefly, the occasion of this Solemn present Assembly would wholly oblige me, which must fill up the last part of my Discourse; tho upon several other accounts I have spoke so largely, and evidently to that matter, that

that a long dwelling upon that cutting Subject, can neither be requir'd or expected.

First, Then I shall Reflect upon the Natural Disobedience of Man, as it is a Violation and Infraction of God's Statutes, and a Contempt of his Commandments.

The Will of God is like the strait, or right Line upon a Surface, whatsoever Starts are made from it, either by Crookedness or any other Errors, or Obliquities, are as unpardonable Faults, as the bad observation of a Rule in Building, or Measuring, or a Chalk in cutting out, or the forsaking the Impression of the Compasses in any other designs of Proportion might amount to. It is, as Physicians inform us, like an Infirmary, or Illness in the first Concoction, which when that Peristaltick Motion in the Bowels is on foot, that separates the Chyle, and upon its Secretion, sends the loosen'd parts of the Nourishment to those several Vessels, that are appropriated for its future Formation and Government, can never be mended in the second. Whenever we wander from Righteousness, and the Laws of God, tho we return again, that does not in the least take off the foulness of the Transgression; tho God upon other Considerations may accept of our Amendment and Sorrow. By the Law,

Law, the Soul that Sinneth, must die, whether it
 Repent or not ; and it was only the Grace, and
 Clemency of the New Testament in the Blood of
 Christ, that could tender us the happy Articles of
 Repentance, and put us upon a new bottom of
 Reconciliation, by his precious death and absolute
 satisfaction. It would otherwise have been fruit-
 lessly in Vain to have urged the fury and impo-
 tence of our Passions, or Inclinations, or the force
 and violence of the Temptation ; we must have
 march'd confounded out of the Paradise we had
 abus'd and polluted ; and have had all the passages
 and inlets of return shut against us by the Angry
 Cherub, and stop't and guarded by his flaming Sword.
 To this End God gave his Statutes to the Sons of
 Men, that they should be observed, and they made
 happy in that Observation. The breaking, or
 contempt of them is at their own Peril, and the
 inward Testimony of every Man's Spirit convinces
 him of this, let him endeavour by what false um-
 brages he pleases to obscure the Light, and stifle
 its operations. This was written by the Finger
 of God on every individual Man's Heart ; before
 the two Tables of Stone in the rise of the Mo-
 saical Dispensation were ever known or produc'd,
 and is of Eternal Force and Obligation, and can-
 not

not be annull'd, but by the absolute annihilation, and dissolution of Man.

The *Greeks* do therefore call it, Νόμος συμμιχτός, or that Law, which is imprest upon, or sodder'd with the very soul of Man: The not following, or obeying which, is like the seminal contaminations in unlawful mixtures, or copulations; it bastardizes the very Mind of Man, and illegitimizes all its powers and actions; and, as the Spurious Offspring of any Body in the Old Law was not to be admitted into the Sanctuary, or a Bastard enter into the Congregation of the Lord, or any of his Posterity, even unto the tenth Generation; so our transgression had debarr'd us for ever and ever from the Holy of Holies; and like *Esau*, for the vile exchange of a present sensuality, we had disinherited our selves, and forfeited our right of Primogeniture, had not the Mercies and Sufferings of our Redeemer re-adopted us into the Sonship of God, and by the Good will and Strength of his favourable Spirit embolden'd us more to cry *Abba*, Father.

This is the Natural State of Man in his perfection, as he shone all Glorious like the Unsully'd Image of God; and as he became filthy, and infected by his own wilful Rebellion, and made him-

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himself like unto the black Figures of the fallen Angels; to argue against the reasonableness of this, and to say, it had been possible for our Creator to have made us incapable of Sinning, or falling, and has preserv'd us in our stations immoveable, is another undoubted Issue of our Corruptions, and an idle wishing, that we might be sav'd, or go to Heaven serving our Lusts, or continuing in our Wickedness; and the same Prophane Stupidity the Apostle Parabolizes in the Pot, that would ask the Potter, why hast thou made me thus? No, no, tis all the Spawn of Hell, the insinuation of the wicked Spirit, and the infusion of the Devil, that would perswade the yielding faculties of Man, and his debauch'd understanding, that the Broad way leads to Heaven, and we could be made happy, whilst we are pursuing the ways and practices of Destruction. And that we could remain God's favourites, whilst we break his Statutes, and disobey still, and yet escape his Justice, and ridicule his Commandments, and still obtain Mercy.

These are the Monstrous Illusions Sin and the Devil would put upon our Enchanted Minds; and what all disobedience would fain hug itself

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in,

in, and flatter the carnal desires of our unreasonable Appetites with. And this is the condition of every Man in the State of Iniquity. And from Particulars is communicated to Generals, as Sin and Vice, like ill Weeds, grow fast, and encrease abundantly, and multiply beyond imagination, and are fruitfully contagious. And by insensible degrees whole Nations become infected, and what before lay dormant in unobserv'd nooks, and gloomy corners, stalks forth in the defiance of the Almighty, and in the face of the Sun overspreads the whole Land with multitude and confidence, and thinks, that its number will be its safeguard and protection; the tenderness of Natural Modesty grows hardened, and is flamingly rampant, disdains all correction, or admonition, and the whole Nation becomes one Pestilential Blotch, Till God shall visit their offences with a Rod, and their sin with Scourges.

I shall therefore, Secondly, consider the terrible effects that attend the Displeasure of an Enrag'd God. And these I shall confine within the circle of temporal Punishments, one of which is the occasion of this present Solemnity, and merited Humiliation; and they may be resolv'd
into

into either seasonable Chastisements, or Monitory Correction, or a Popular Infatuation, or a General Excision, or Subversion of a Nation, the end of that.

Seasonable Chastisements, or Monitory Corrections, are indeed but the Rod that our Backs smart under for our Offences. When Famine shall gall and aggrieve, when Pestilence shall confound and plague, when the Sword and Battel shall wound or diminish, or when Storm or Tempest shall hurry and sweep away the Sinful and Wicked Inhabitants: 'Tis in any of these timely afflictions that we may ascertain ourselves, that the Angel of the Lord is Whipping us for our Transgressions, to try if those milder castigations, and seasonable rebukes will precaution us against a more terrible and impending Calamity, and stop its approaches, and prevent its terrours. If a Nation stoops with a penitential humility and contrition, under the admonishing strokes, and Fatherly correction, Hither, says the Almighty, as he does to the raging and struggling Sea, shalt thou go to the Ministering Angel, and no further; seest thou not, how even the wicked *Ahab* boweth himself in Sackcloth and Ashes before me? As I live, saith the

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Lord,

Lord, his Repentance is accepted, my Wrath is appeas'd and diverted, and I take no delight in the death of a Sinner, but the Evil day is removed far from him.

But if the prophane People grow harden'd and deaf to all warnings, he dementates all their Counsils, turns their Stupidity into Madness, or delivers them over to be rid and gallopt on by the Spirit of Infatuation. He either turns the Wisdom of their Councillors into Folly, or makes the People regardless of their policies and opinions, be they never so rational and well grounded, or frustrates both in the unsuccessfulness of the Event; all which concur, and are made manifest in the Story and Example of *Achitophel*, who found the multitudes, like the Adder, deaf to all his Charms, Charm'd he never so wisely; and indeed People of another Nation, where they are unconcern'd Spectators, easily see this in Neighbouring Kingdoms, tho like dark Lanthorns, they glow not to themselves, or cast light backwards. And indeed there cannot be a surer mark of any Nations misery or downfal, than Infatuation, or an unthinking stupid insensibility of its dangerous circumstances. It is like the Mortification in the Limbs, or Members of the
Body,

Body, that if neglected, rots; or if not cut off will endanger the lopping off, or ruine of the whole; and as it is the consequence of slighted favours and rejected Mercy, and the character of the worst Ingratitude, so it is the undoubted presage, and unquestionable fore-runner of entire ruine and perdition, which is the extremity of God's inflictions, and the severest of his knotted and acutest Scourges.

When Cordials fail, and Opiates, and Hypnoticks will do no good, the Physician of course flies to Amputation, or Incision, or Causticks; to lopping off, to corroding or eating out the dead parts, or launcing, or tearing, or cutting up, and burning. This is the Gradation of all Physick, all Corrosion, and the Steps and Paces God takes in working with all Nations. The whole habitable World having groan'd in their turns for their Iniquities after this manner; and as God Almighty makes use of one Nation to be the Minister of his Wrath in scourging another, and Kingdom tyes on the Lashes against Kingdom, at the Displeasure of the Almighty, so his Vengeance returns methodically from the Suffering upon the domineering Chastiser; and his Wrath rolls backward and forwards, and his rage, like

that of the Sea, has its constant Ebbings and Flowings. Thus, like the Sun, it began its course from the East, in the *Assyrian* and *Persian* Monarchies, erected upon the successful attempts of their Armies, and drove West, and North West, till the *Macedonian* and *Roman* Forces repell'd its fury, and not only beat it back again into its bounds and confines, but shackl'd the Bold Invaders, and fell at last themselves Vassals to the Northern parts of *Asia* and *Europe*; that have thrown their Chains over the *Roman* Empire in *Europe*, and the *Grecian* in the East; tho the latter has been the more dreadful Overthrow, as being lodg'd in the power of Infidels, and the Suppression and Captivity of poor and pitiable Christianity.

Nor have we of this Unfortunate, but once Happy Island, which is the last scope, and end of my present discourse, been entirely exempted from even all these undoubted Marks of God's anger. It would tire your patience to give you a full account of the several Invasions, and Conquests of this Nation, which no people singly durst have essay'd or adventur'd, had we stood united, and undivided at home. Our dissensions, and unnatural animosities, and uncharitable behaviours one towards another, flow
from

from our lusts and sins, and lay us open an easie prey to an Enemy, we might otherwise, by the Assistance of God, teach better manners: They spend all their strength and fury in weakening our selves, in fostering distractions, breeding confusion and factions, in raising up Altar against Altar; making, and inflaming, and fomenting Parties; one for *Paul*, and one for *Apollo's*, but who for *Christ*?

Sin is the bitter Fountain, the Mortal Spring, from whence all these unwholesome Waters stream and gush. That permitted God to divide our Land, (as he did that of *Israel*, between the Tribes of *Judah* and *Israel*, the *Guelfs* and *Ghibellines* of *Palestine*,) into the Houses of *York* and *Lancaster's* Quarrels; in which unnatural and bloody Wars, all authentick Records do allow, that ten thousand Families were entirely extinct. Prodigious Madness of the People? That in 41. blew the Trumpet, and beat the Drum, and drew the Sword between the King, and his Savage and Cruel Subjects: That upon the restoration of his Son, when the Land grew fat and pamper'd, call'd for the pouring out of his dreadful Vials, in the Plague, the Conflagration of *London*, the Common sewer of Wickedness, the Mother of Disobedience, and a bloody War
with

with our Neighbours : That threw us afterwards into publick heats, and intestine divisions, and a long, and as yet unfinisht War; and exasperated Him lately by Storm and Tempest to mark us for our Sins, and admonish us of our Impudence; and only gives this, as a taste of what we must expect, and the prelude of future miseries.

We are not to imagine, that those our miserable Countrymen, who perisht in that wreck and tempest, were greater Sinners than our selves, tho possibly great ones. But apply that just admonition of our Saviour to ourselves, *Luke c. 13. v. 4.* Think ye, says he to the Jews, that those eighteen, upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. And so shall we. The Rampant Confidence of Vice, and bold defence of Heresie, and impious attempts at the subversion of the faith of Christ, by the Deists and Atheists of late years, unless Repentance and Amendment intervene, may provoke God to cut us off, or throw us back again into the Shades, and gloomy obscurities of Popery. Since we have made such ill use of the Blessings, and
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endeavour to quench the light of the Gospel, and hinder the spreading of its illumination, and Vital warmth.

But the late instance of God's wrath, which is in a great measure the occasion of our present meeting, and humiliation, is a fresh remembrance of our Sins, and his Scourges; and tho' it has pleas'd God, that our small Parish has escap'd the Storm with little or no damage, yet we ought therefore to be more grateful, that the Angel of the Lord espy'd the Lintel upon our Door-posts, and overlookt our Vices, and have a just sence of our Sins, towards their amendment for the future, and a due fellow feeling of our Brethren and Countrymen's sufferings and sad fates. Besides the mighty losses endur'd in the havock of Hay, and Corn, and Cattel; the untiling, and ripping up of Houses; the blowing up the Sheets of Lead on Churches; the tearing Oaks up by the Roots; and other unexampled miseries from the fury and rage of the Tempest, and even the Deaths of several persons, and those of no mean rank, or unhallow'd Lives; we are inform'd of a publick loss, that might have laid us open to the insults of our Enemies; and, of an Isle, made our Land pas-

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sable

sable as a Continent. For our Shipping is the Strength, and Ribs, and Bulwark of our Nation ; of which we have lost fourteen fighting Vessels, or Men of War ; fifteen hundred and odd Saylor, abundance of Merchant Ships, with a long and Black list of those of lesser note. Little Cares are apt, like Shallow Waters, to be noisie, and rattle as they descend in frequent breaks and falling Cataracts ; whilst great and heavy Calamities, like deep Channels, in their greatest rapidity flow without almost being perceiv'd to stir, or make any discovery. The former make us waspish, and bawl ; but the latter lock up our senses with horror, seize us with a confus'd numness, and petrifie us into Rock and Marble.

The most adventurous Squadrons of our Fleets and Royal Navies have spread their Sheets over the Globe without any damage like this, and saw both Poles without any loss or hazard comparable to it. We have beat the Vain-glorious Armada of *Spain*, without half the Ruine ; fought the *Algerines*, *Portugeze* and *Dutch* in one Age, without any calamity equal to this, and been Victorious in all those Enterprizes : Burnt sixteen Capital Ships, and sunk as many of the
French

French at La hogue, Bantry and Camaret Bay, with no harm at all receiv'd, if ballanc'd against this ; Which ought to be a sufficient lesson, that there is no standing against the smallest indignation of the Lord, or defying or disobeying the Ruler of Heaven, the least Sprig in whose Rod can whip us into Consternation, and the smallest Knot in whose Scourges can make us bleed into confusion and horror. One puff, or blast from Heaven, can shatter and bulge the mightiest Fleets we find ; and one gust of Wind, which is nothing else but a violent agitation of attenuated or rarefy'd Vapours, can sink or break the vastest and proudest Navies, when the Sins of a Nation call down for Vengeance from Heaven, and its Iniquities heat the Thunderbolts of the Lord of Battel.

Let this therefore be a timely warning-piece to us, that we purge our hearts, and purifie our double minds ; That our Dominion may be set in the Sea, and our Right Hand in the Floods : For if once we lose the Empire of the Waters, farewell to the Glory, nay, the Safety of *Great Britain*. And at this time of Day it behoves us more to sacrifice our hatreds, private resentments, lusts, and passions, to the Common

Good of the Kingdom : And love one another, and become new Creatures, and obedient to God's holy Statutes ; because we have to deal with a Prince, the Progress of whose Successful Banners have startled the World, and fill Christendom with Dread and Amazement. A Prince, that was Suckl'd in Blood, and bred up to Conquest and Slaughter : A Prince, whom God Almighty, for their Sins, has permitted to scourge his People, and ravage all the Frontier Countries that surround him. A Prince of unbounded Ambition, and naturally Subdalous and Daring : Close in his Councils, and bold in his Attempts : Master of a Kingdom, fam'd in Arts, and great in Arms ; that spares neither Blood nor Gold to accomplish his designs ; that, as he has Troops and Batallions at hand ready to execute his Scarlet Commands ; has also his Emiffaries, as so many under Imps, managing in every little lurking hole, and purveying, like so many Jackcalls, game for the Jaws of the Blood-thirsty Lyon : That was able, with *France* alone, to grapple with the United Troops and Confederated Armies of most of the Christian Princes, and keep 'em at a bay. And now plumes and towers in the fatal union, and dreadful conjunction of the *Spanish* Monarchy.

Yet

Yet Great as he stands, Defying like *Goliath* the
 Host of the Living God, when the Lord sanctifies
 the Hand, a Pebble-stone, taken from the Cold
 Brook, and slung by the Arm of a Stripling,
 may strike, and sink into his Forehead, and lay
 him and his Ambitious hopes prostrate on the
 Ground; and this he seems to dread. For it is
 not the Magnificence of *Versailles* that can keep
 out Trouble and Confusion; but tumultuous
 Cares will fly around the Gilded Fronts, and
 Vermillion'd Ceilings of the Gaudyest Palaces.
 And the two Greatest Obstacles he fears are a
 Woman, and a Youth; Her present Majesty,
 and the King of *Spain* newly proclaim'd.

'Tis in our power, by our Penitence and
 prayers to promote this glorious design so far,
 that every holy Ejaculation, when our Lives are
 amended, may give new Courage to the droop-
 ing Souldier; every Sigh fill our Victorious
 Canvas with prosperous gales, and fan the Sails
 with assisting Winds; That this Invader of the
 Liberties of Christendom, and sworn Enemy of
 the Reformed Religion, may be turn'd back the
 way he came, the Horse and the Horseman tum-
 bled down to the Ground, our Ships destroy'd by
 no more Tempests, our Land in fear of no more
 Insults,

Insults; our Queen, as her Piety deserves, Easy,
 and the Pride of the Admiring World; Our
 Church, our Laws, our Liberties, establish'd on
 a Rock, our Monarchy founded in the Seas, our
 people loving and united, our Conversations pu-
 rify'd, and our sins blotted out; our Armies
 crown'd with Laurel, and our Fleet enrich'd with
 Bracelets of Coral, and Armlets of Pearls.
 Then shall God remove his Rod, and with-
 draw his Scourges. Then Judgment shall dwell
 in the Land, and Righteousness in the fruit-
 ful Field. And the Work of Righteousness
 shall be Peace; and the Effect of Righteousness,
 Quietness, and Assurance for Ever.

Now to God, &c.

F I N I S